

Wycombe Wanderers 4, Bath City 1

WYCOMBE WANDERERS could have hardly wished for a better start to the season than they made on Saturday when they beat the strong Southern League club, Bath City, by a clear margin of three goals.

After a shaky start, last year's Isthmian League runners up, produced the sort of football that could easily mean they will go one better in the league this year.

All the new faces at Loakes Park fitted in extremely well, the pick of them being Les Hartridge and Bernie Bremer. Ted Powell tidied up well at the back, while Ian MacLean showed enough of his talents to suggest he is a useful acquisition. David Walker and Larry Pritchard, two players who have been training with Wycombe, were not in the side.

Perhaps the outstanding player was John Hutchinson, a young winger who never really reached his peak form at Wycombe last season.

On Saturday, he looked a new player. His running and positioning were excellent and his determination equally as good.

By
Stuart Earp

Tony Horseman, top of the goal averages again last year, is there again this time — already! Tony scored two typical goals on Saturday, the second being a real beauty.

Premier Southern League club Bath, were soon drawing appreciative applause from the crowd in the opening minutes with a string of fast attacking raids on the Wycombe goal. Their stocky little winger, Rogers was the main source of trouble.

The pitch, looking in peak condition, suited his fast running and at first he gave MacLean a hard time. The other Bath player that caught the eye was Faulkes, who on several occasions put in some

evasive running finalised with a powerful shot.

Two pieces of desperate ill luck for Bath set the tone for the game in the opening minutes. First Faulkes struck the foot of an upright after beating three would-be tacklers then Rogers repeated the process, rocking the angle of the bar and upright.

Had either of these materialised into goals, then the game could have been entirely different. As it was the Blues weathered the initial storm and came back in force.

In their first serious attack of the game they took a rather undeserved lead. Hutchinson sent Horseman away down the flank, gave the ball to the overlapping John Delaney who steadied then sent across a low centre back to Horseman, who turned it into goal.

Both sides went close with quick attacks but it was Wycombe who went further ahead after 25 minutes. Bernie Bremer was the scorer — his first goal for Wanderers — with a cracking drive which left 'keeper McAuley stranded.

Despite being two down, Bath rallied well and always looked likely to pull a goal back through their talented duo, Faulkes and Rogers.

Once more though it was Wanderers who turned the chance into a goal when Johnny Hutchinson beat full back Burt on the wing and sent a pin point cross over for Horseman to turn and crack past McAuley in grand style.

Keith Searle and MacLean hit the crossbar and side netting respectively before Wanderers entered the dressing rooms with a 3-0 lead.

Ian Rundle came on for Ian MacLean at the start of the second half, and Bath substituted Abrahams for Burt. After one quick fire attack, Wycombe went somewhat off the boil, hardly surprising in the humid conditions.

Bath retrieved one goal in the 65th minute when Rogers' centre from the wing was headed in well by Taylor. Bath skipper Johnny Petts started the move by robbing Geoff Anthony in the Bath half, but on the whole, Petts — an ex-Arsenal and Bristol Rovers man — failed to assert any authority in the game.

Sharp attacks by both sides led to near misses, but it was a measure of the Wycombe defence that Bath were mainly confined to long range shooting which John Maskell dealt with well. However once or twice they were caught flat footed by the Swift passing of the Bath players.

One pleasing aspect of the game was the determination of the players — Powell, Hutchinson for Wycombe and Faulkes and Rogers for Bath particularly — which made the match anything but a friendly. The football though was of a high and clean standard throughout the game.

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With three minutes remaining Wanderers confirmed their superiority on the day by netting a fourth through Keith Searle. Searle was left with only the keeper to beat for the second time in the match: this time he made no mistake.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS: J. Maskell, I. MacLean (sub, I. Rundle, half-time), C. Gale, E. Powell, J. Delaney, L. Hartridge, G. Anthony, B. Bremer, K. Searle, A. Horseman, J. Hutchinson, (Subs, O'Brien, Baker, Faulkner), T. McAuley.